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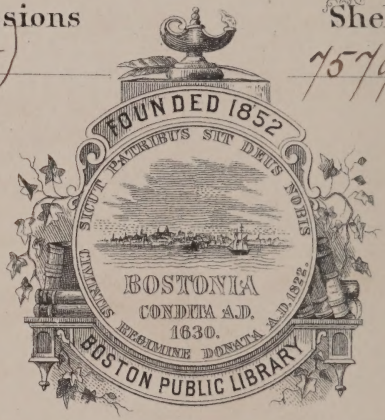

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CONSTITUTION AND REGULATIONS

OF THE

PENITENT FEMALES' REFUGE,

BOSTON.

THE

PENITENT FEMALES' REFUGE,

IN THE CITY OF BOSTON,

EMBRACING ITS

Object, Act of Incorporation, Constitution, and Rules and Regulations.

BOSTON:
PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN, 24 CONGRESS STREET.
1850.

B. H.
(175)
Aug. 15, 1889.

PENITENT FEMALES' REFUGE.

THE object which the benevolent founders of this institution wished to accomplish by its formation, is perhaps sufficiently obvious from the name by which they have designated it. It is intended to benefit that class of females who have been allured from the paths of virtue and purity—the victims or the associates of the licentious and abandoned; and who are desirous of escaping from the ruin and wretchedness which lies before them. It is a source of unutterable regret to every Christian Philanthropist, who is aware in any measure of the number and degradation of this class among us, that so few of them are sensible of the awful end to which they are hastening, or have so little inclination to pause in their path to ruin; and, that so small a portion only of those who, by the visitation of Providence, or the treachery of companions in sin, are brought to reflection, and are compelled to look into the gulf of misery which is ready to receive them, can be persuaded to break from their course of sin, and seek by repentance and reformation, a return to virtue and happiness; and in regard to these it would be well if at such a time, some kind friend were at hand to guide them to a *Refuge*. It is this portion alone that we

can hope to benefit by our instructions and efforts; and it is to such that the doors of our institution are opened, and our sympathies tendered.

The reformation contemplated is not partial or temporary, but radical and entire. To those therefore who would be admitted to its privileges, or seek admission for others, we would say: that there is very little benefit to be expected for those who come with any other motives than a sincere desire forever to forsake their past course of life, and a firm resolution to persevere in a course of well-doing, whatever pains or self-denial it may cost them. To such we are confident no regulations or requirements of the institution will be thought unnecessary or unreasonable. As it has been founded for their benefit, so its regulations have been framed with special reference to the same end; and whenever it has failed to benefit permanently those who have been its inmates, it has resulted from the want of an honest desire, and a persevering determination to reform, on the part of the individual. It is obvious that one of the first principles in its management, as in every prosperous community or family, must be, that a prompt and cheerful obedience is to be rendered to all the reasonable commands and directions of those who are intrusted with its government, and a willingness on the part of each to co-operate; and by a good example and kind offices to promote the good of every other member.

It is very desirable, for the good of the indivdual seeking the benefit of the institution, as well as to enable it to extend its aid to the greatest number of the same class, that whatever is done in each case should be accomplished in the shortest possible time; and yet it will be obvious to every reflecting mind, when the object to be attained and the difficulties in the way to be surmounted are considered, that a very brief space of time will be insufficient. The

path from virtue to vice is downward, and the passage is often soon accomplished; but to retrace the way and regain the lost eminence is far from being an easy, or generally, an expeditious journey. Evil passions and propensities acquire a dreadful control by an unrestrained indulgence. The obstacles which early good impressions and the voice of conscience interpose to a course of infamy and vice, at its commencement, and in its progress step by step, having been once overcome, a relapse is comparatively easy; and every subsequent effort to reform, the more discouraging. No newly formed resolution, however sincere, no regret for the consequences of transgression, however bitter, will make it certain that the individual will not fall before the first assault of temptation. A long course of resistance to evil inclinations and habits, and the diligent cultivation and strengthening of every good principle, will alone convince others, and ought alone to convince the individual, that a course of virtue may be maintained and a respectable standing in society regained. In most cases habits of industry and application are to be formed and strengthened—instruction in the first rudiments of a common education, and in the most simple departments of domestic economy are to be imparted, to prepare the individual to sustain herself honorably and usefully when leaving our roof. It is with these views that the time for a residence at the Refuge, proposed in our Rules, has been fixed as the shortest in which, in the opinion of the Directors, an object so desirable can be accomplished; and with any adequate sense of the priceless value of a character and life redeemed from infamy—a foundation laid for future usefulness and happiness—and above all, as we would ardently hope, a soul redeemed from sin and prepared for endless felicity,—a seclusion from the world for this brief period cannot be worthy of the name of a sacrifice.

As in the management of the concerns of the Refuge, and in the instruction of those committed to their care, the Directors would feel their dependence on God for wisdom adequate for the proper discharge of these duties, they would also deeply feel and acknowledge the necessity of a manifestation of the power of Divine Grace to render them effectual; and though they have to regret the many cases in which they have reaped only disappointment, yet for those in which this grace has been vouchsafed and the most happy result attained, they would be devoutly thankful.

Act of Incorporation.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD, ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND TWENTY-THREE.

An Act to incorporate the Penitent Females' Refuge, in the City of Boston.

SECTION 1. BE it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives, in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, That Horace Fox, Edmund Parsons, Abraham A. Dame, Thomas Vose, William Jenks, John C. Proctor, Pliny Cutler, Aaron P. Cleveland, Charles Tappan, George Odiorne, John Tappan, Heman Lincoln, Edmund A. Winchester, Henry Homes, George J. Homer, Moses Grant, Francis Wayland, Jr., and Alden Bradford, together with such others as may hereafter be associated with them, and their successors, be, and they hereby are incorporated by the name of "The Penitent Females' Refuge, in the City of Boston;" and by that name shall be a Corporation forever, for the purpose of affording relief, assistance and protection to penitent females, with power to have a common seal, to receive and hold any sum or sums of money from persons disposed to promote the intentions of said Society; to make contracts relative to the objects thereof, to sue and be sued, to establish by-laws and orders for the regulation of said Society, and the due preservation and application of its funds; provided the same be not repugnant to the Constitution and Laws of this Commonwealth; and to take and hold real and personal estate, not exceeding the sum of twenty thousand dollars.

SEC. 2. Be it further enacted, That said Corporation shall annually meet in Boston, at such time and place as they may from time to time appoint, for the purpose of electing, by ballot, such officers for the term of one year, and until others shall be elected and qualified in their stead, with such powers and duties as may be prescribed by the by-laws of said Corporation.

SEC. 3. Be it further enacted, That any two of the persons above named, be and they hereby are authorized to call the first meeting of said Corporation, by advertisement printed in any newspaper published in the city of Boston, at least seven days prior to the appointment of such meeting.

SEC. 4. Be it further enacted, That the present officers of the said association, shall continue to execute their several duties, until an election of officers shall have taken place, agreeably to the provisions of said act: provided, nevertheless, that the Legislature may alter or repeal this act, whenever it shall be deemed expedient.

Approved by the Governor, Jan. 21, 1823.

Copy, A. BRADFORD, *Secretary.*

CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE 1. This Society shall be known by the name of THE PENITENT FEMALES' REFUGE, in the City of Boston.

ART. 2. Any person who shall pay annually, at least two dollars, shall be a member of the Society; or by the payment of twenty-five dollars, shall become a member for life. All those who shall have acted as Directors since the incorporation of the Society, shall also be regarded as permanent members, unless they decline; and the Society shall have power to elect other members at any regular meeting, on the nomination of the Board of Directors.

ART. 3. The annual meeting, for the choice of officers, by ballot, shall be held on the first Thursday in the month of February.

ART. 4. The officers of this Society, shall be a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and ten Directors, who, together, shall be the Board of Directors; which Board, thus constituted, shall have the entire management and government of the house, and shall maintain a constant superintendence, by visits of inspection, made by some one or more of their own number, in such manner and order, as the Board shall prescribe; and shall make a report of their proceedings, and of the state of the Refuge, to the Society, at the annual meeting.

ART 5. The Board shall meet once in each month. Five members shall constitute a quorum. They shall enact by-laws to govern their own proceedings, and for the regulation of the Refuge.

ART. 6. The Board shall have power to fill all vacancies which may happen in their number by death, resignation, or non-attendance, and the persons so appointed, shall be members until the next annual meeting.

ART. 7. The Secretary shall conduct the correspondence of the Society, under the direction of the Board; and shall keep a fair record of the proceedings of the Board, and of the Society. He shall also notify the members of all meetings.

ART. 8. The Treasurer shall take charge of all monies and other property belonging to the Society, and keep a just and fair account of all his receipts and expenditures. He shall not pay out monies on account of the Institution, except by order of the Directors. His books of account shall be open for inspection, by any member of the Society, at all regular meetings. He shall also make a full report of the State of the funds at the annual meeting.

ART. 9. No person shall be employed as a Superintendent

of the Refuge, who does not possess a reputation for piety and discretion.

ART. 10. Any four members of the Board may require a special meeting, either of the Board or of the Society.

ART. 11. This Constitution may not be altered, but at the annual meeting; such alteration having been presented in writing to the Board of Directors at a regular monthly meeting.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

OF THE PENITENT FEMALES' REFUGE, CITY OF BOSTON.

Of the Government.

1. IT shall be the duty of the Superintendent to regulate and oversee all the arrangements of the house, to conduct the morning and evening devotions, to exercise a parental government over the persons committed to her charge, and by every suitable means instill into their minds the principles of industry, neatness, and piety. She will keep a register of the inmates, and of applicants for admission, and make a monthly report of the state of the family, and so far as it may be necessary, of the progress of each individual, to the Board of Directors. She will also keep an accurate account of the expenses of the house, of the articles received, and the work accomplished; and in general will be considered the responsible head of the Institution.

2. There shall be one or more Assistant Superintendents, according to the number of inmates in the house, whose duty it shall be, under the direction of the Superintendent, to oversee the work of the inmates, and to keep a watchful and friendly supervision over their whole deportment and conversation, by night as well as by day, and generally to aid the Superintendent in accomplishing the purposes of the Institution.

Of Admission and Discharge.

1. Every female who is sincerely desirous of being reclaimed from a course of vice, shall be regarded as a candidate for admission, but preference shall always be given to those whose departure from virtue has been the least aggravated, either in character or duration.

2. Any such candidate who shall promise to conform to the regulations of the Refuge, and to the directions of the Superintendents, may be immediately received on application to either

of the Directors, to any member of the Ladies' Committee, or to the superintendent at the Refuge, unless on inquiry there should be some reason to doubt the sincerity of her professions of a desire to reform. The case of each person thus received shall be reported to the Committee of the month.

3. Each inmate is considered as placing herself under the care of the Institution until the Directors shall think it proper to give her a regular discharge, either in consequence of a reconciliation with her friends, or by procuring for her a suitable place.

4. The Directors, or the Committee of the month, shall always have power to dismiss any inmate for misconduct.

5. No inmate shall be permitted to remain in the Refuge more than two years, unless under very peculiar circumstances, to be judged of by the Board of Directors. If during that time her deportment shall not have been such as to entitle her to a recommendation to a place, she shall be dismissed as irreclaimable.

Employment.

1. Not less than seven, nor more than eight hours shall be allowed for sleep.

2. Evening prayers will be attended at half past eight o'clock in summer, and at nine o'clock in winter, when circumstances do not prevent.

3. The inmates will retire to rest as early as ten o'clock.

4. Each inmate shall have a separate room, for the neatness and good order of which she shall be responsible.

5. The inmates will rise at the ringing of a bell at five o'clock in summer, and six o'clock in winter. Half an hour will be allowed for reading the Scriptures and private devotion; and the bell for morning prayers will be rung one hour after that for rising.

6. Prayers, both at morning and evening, will be accompanied with reading the Scriptures, and singing.

7. The day will be spent in such labor as the Superintendents shall direct.

8. A committee of the Ladies' Auxiliary Society is expected to visit weekly, for the purpose of examining the state of the house, ascertaining the conduct and improvement of the inmates, and affording such advice and encouragement as may be proper.

9. No person, except the officers of the Ladies' Auxiliary Society, or a Director, shall be allowed to visit an inmate, without permission in writing from the committee of the month; and with such a permission, the visit shall only be in the presence of one of the Superintendents. In all such cases

especial care shall be taken not to violate the confidence of the inmates by exposing them to the intrusion of strangers.

Instruction and Deportment.

1. It shall be the duty of the Superintendents, by advice and instruction, as well as by a Christian example, and also by directing the reading of the inmates, to teach them the principles and duties of religion; it being constantly borne in mind, that whilst the importance of retrieving an injured character is to be highly valued, the necessity of that renovation of heart and life which shall be to the salvation of the soul, is of infinitely higher consequence.

2. It is expected of the inmates, that their deportment will be in conformity to the character of the instructions prescribed in the preceding rule; that they avoid all improper conversation, all mutual reproaches for past delinquency, and that they abstain from every thing inconsistent with the design of the Institution.

3. The Directors will provide that public worship be held in the Refuge at least once every Lord's day, when, if practicable, the services of a clergyman will be obtained; and on such other occasions as they shall appoint.

OFFICERS FOR 1850.

PRESIDENT.

JAMES C. DUNN.

VICE PRESIDENT.

BENJAMIN PERKINS.

TREASURER.

HENRY CLARK.

SECRETARY.

WILLIAM W. DAVENPORT.

DIRECTORS.

GEORGE ROGERS,
A. A. GOULD,
PHILIP S. PAGE,
JOSEPH HALE,
IRA P. RANKIN,
DANIEL CHURCH,
ORMOND DUTTON,
JOSEPH C. TYLER,
WILLIAM WILLETT,
GEORGE ALDEN.

(Dec., 1888, 20,000)

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